

years have seen the sadness and heart-wrenching agony caused by three major attacks on rail systems in Madrid, London and disturbingly yesterday in India. These three attacks alone have led to some astonishing numbers, 22 bomb blasts, 15 trains destroyed, 390 people dead and over 1,650 injuries and countless lives forever altered. The shock, horror and loss of life resulting from these acts of terrorism are reminders that the United States must do more to strengthen rail security.

Our passenger rail systems are vulnerable potential targets for terrorists. The 9/11 Commission's final report noted that "surface transportation systems such as railroads and mass transit remain hard to protect because they are so accessible and extensive." Throughout the country, there are over 300,000 miles of freight rail lines and over 10,000 miles of commuter and urban rail system lines. On a typical weekday, 11.3 million passengers use rail or mass transit, and at any given time, hazardous materials are transported throughout the country.

Yet we still do not have a comprehensive national strategy for rail security. The Transportation Security Administration has not yet implemented adequate security guidelines for rail and mass transit systems similar to those required for airports. The Department of Homeland Security does not even require rail and mass transit systems to complete vulnerability assessments or submit security plans to the Department. Nor are we providing adequate funding for rail security. Over the past four years, the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration have spent on average \$9 per air passenger, as compared to only one penny for each rail or mass transit passenger. One penny to prevent bombs, chemical and biological agents does not go far enough for tools, prevention and training.

It is clear that many of our rail and mass transit employees lack adequate security training. In a 2005 survey of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 84 percent of those surveyed said they had not received "any training" or "additional training" related to terrorism prevention and response in the previous twelve months. We in Congress must have a frank discussion about our rail system, from AMTRAK, to the Metro in DC, the L in Chicago and the T in Boston and of course the subway in New York City. It is time for the U.S. to implement a coordinated national strategy for rail security, to provide adequate security training for rail and mass transit employees, and to fully fund rail security programs.

I commend my colleagues for introducing the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act. The reforms in this bill are long overdue. We have seen over and over again the pain these terrorist acts have brought to ordinary citizens. We cannot afford to wait until tragedy strikes again to improve this country's rail security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OBERSTAR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act was our greatest accomplishment in the long struggle against discrimination and oppression. It has changed the face of this Nation and enabled millions of Americans the opportunity to vote.

During the 1960s, we saw many brave men and women rise up against the oppression of Jim Crow and demand an equal voice in our democracy. In this battle for the most basic of rights, many heroic Americans were beaten and imprisoned, saw their churches burned or bombed, or were killed in the name of freedom and justice. I am proud to serve alongside Congressman JOHN LEWIS, whose bravery and presence during that historic march in Selma changed this Nation.

There are many young people who may not know of this battle towards equality. It is imperative we recognize and celebrate our great accomplishments as a nation. We cannot develop future policies or laws without applying the lessons we have learned from the past.

This August will mark the 41st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. There are many who say there is no longer a need for the Voting Rights Act. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is true that we have made remarkable progress since 1965, however, there is still much work to be done.

Minorities continue to face an uphill battle of misinformation over polling locations, the purging of voter rolls, scare tactics, and inaccessible voting locations. Prior to the 2004 elections, students at Prairie View A&M were told they could no longer register to vote in Waller County, Texas. The fear was that the eight thousand students at this Historically Black College would elect someone the local District Attorney didn't want.

The Voting Rights Act helped protect these students from becoming disenfranchised voters. This change in voter registration was not pre-cleared by the Department of Justice, as required by Section 5. Ultimately, the Texas Attorney General and the Department of Justice intervened and provided these students with the access and opportunity to vote. This is just one example of why we still need Section 5 and the Voting Rights Act.

Section 5 is current, necessary and protects the rights of millions of Americans. The reality is that there are still some people out there who don't want minorities to vote.

As part of the backlash against illegal immigration, there have been calls to eliminate bilingual voting assistance. I feel that Americans should be able to speak English; however, I do not endorse testing language abilities as a prerequisite to vote. Those who receive bilingual voting assistance are American citizens. They weren't required to pass a language test to pay taxes or serve in the military, so they shouldn't have to prove their language skills in order to vote.

The Voting Rights Act was not and never will be about special rights—it is about equal

rights. Our democracy and our values as Americans are contingent upon the idea that every person should have the right to vote and have that vote counted.

We have made amazing progress since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, but progress does not mean that we stop trying. Now is the time to reauthorize this historic cornerstone of civil rights. It is imperative to our rights, our freedom and our democracy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ENGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS TREVOR J. DIESING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant First Class Trevor J. Diesing of Plum City, WI. Trevor rose to the call to serve his country in her time of need, and gave the ultimate sacrifice in her defense. He was killed in Iraq when an improvised explosive device detonated near his position. Today, I bear witness that Trevor's efforts and the efforts of all our service men and women will forever be remembered. This Friday at the courthouse in Prescott, Wisconsin a plaque will be dedicated in Trevor's memory.

Trevor is a true national hero. Born to Debbie and Lonnie Diesing in Plum City, WI, Trevor felt a call early in life to serve his country and to help make the world a better place. After marrying his wife Lori and raising three beautiful children, Trevor's passion to defend what he loved was only strengthened. Friends and family described him as someone you always wanted on your side—a hard working and caring person who was always willing to lend a hand. When we step back and realize the incredible service of our men and women in uniform, we must always remember Trevor, for he was one of our finest.

The presence of men and women from Wisconsin serving in Iraq is a great blessing to our country as a whole. They all are doing a terrific job under very difficult and dangerous circumstances. We will be forever grateful for the sacrifice made by Sergeant First Class Trevor J. Diesing. Trevor was in essence a true patriot, serving his country selflessly while giving to the Iraqi people the greatest gift of all, their freedom. He also gave the children of America a great hope, the chance to grow up in a world that is a little more safe.

As a husband, father, son, and friend, Trevor will live on in our hearts as a hero and his legacy will never be forgotten. I pledge to do all that I can to ensure that Trevor's life was not lost in vain.

Perhaps President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said it best: "He stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die, that freedom might live, and grow, and increase its blessings. Freedom lives, and through it, he lives—in a way that humbles the undertakings of most men."

May God bless Trevor, and take him into his care. And may God's special blessing bring comfort to Trevor's family and friends always.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address this House about an issue that, at least as I travel around my district, as I travel around my State, is one of the defining issues of our time, and that is the issue which we are hearing about every day: What are we going to do about the immigration policy and the immigration influx into this country?

I thought I would come down here today and see if we could not analyze this the way we sort of like to analyze evidence as we do in the courtroom. We need to take a look at what is the problem that brings us to this point that we have to address this thing, and I would propose first and foremost we need to look at the big problem and decide where is the crisis today as we stand here on this floor on July 12.

Where would the American public define the crisis to be as we deal with people who are coming into this country from other countries? And when I say other countries, I mean many, many other countries but predominantly I am addressing today the crossing of our southern border out of Mexico. Where are we concerned and why are we concerned?

Many people say, let us look at the big picture of this issue, which is that we have an estimate that is somewhere between 12 million and 15 million people that have come into this country since we granted amnesty back in 1986 or 1987 under the Reagan administration and opened the doors to the people who are here and gave them a fast track to American citizenship. We then said that we would go to the border and protect our borders and crack down on those people who would offer employment to folks who wanted to come in here illegally and we would prevent that. Mr. Speaker, the number, and whatever it may be but it is in the millions, clearly above 10 million and less than 20 million by most estimates, that are here in this country, as some like to say hiding in the shadows of our economy today, they are here. Now, why are they here?

Did we enforce the border? No. Did we crack down on employers that were employing these people? No. Did we do what we promised the American people we would do when we basically granted amnesty to 3 million people back in the 1980s? And that 3 million, by the way, grew in great proportion, because when

those people received amnesty they were also able to bring in their families, their children and their wives and their extended families, until that number grew to substantially more than what was estimated.

We will not go into that today, but did we do our job? Did we, as Democrats for a long time and as Republicans for a long time, did we do our job? I submit to you that the evidence shows we did not. And because the great prize of being forgiven of your sins, if you will, was granted in the 1980s, millions more came.

So is that the crisis? Those people, are they the crisis that have people so concerned across the country today? It is of interest. People are somewhat concerned, but I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that is not the crisis that people are concerned about and that is on their minds when they sit down to breakfast in the morning or when they talk to their families at night or when they visit with their neighbors or when they go out in public. That is not the concern. The concern is that border and those people coming across.

Mr. Speaker, we hear from people in this country, and there is certainly a valid economic argument for it, that we need these folks to come in here and take the jobs that Americans don't want. And there is some validity to that argument. There is some validity to many of these diligent hardworking people who have come to this country to take really tough jobs out there, working in the heat in Texas in the summertime, which is, believe me, having done it, it is a hard job. No matter where you are, if you are out digging post holes, laying asphalt, or putting a roof on in Texas, you are earning your pay. It is hot, tiring, almost thankless work. So we say we need these folks to build those fences, put those roofs down, and lay that asphalt. We need them. We have to have them. And there are those who can present evidence to that effect and make an argument for it.

But is that the crisis that people are worried about in this country? Is that what people, your neighbors, are visiting with you about? Is that what you are talking about when you gather in your community: Oh, we have such a shortage of workers here. We have so many jobs that people are not doing. We are just really in such desperate need of help, it is a crisis in our country. Mr. Speaker, I would also submit that is not the crisis that the American people are concerned about.

So then let's examine this picture further. Let's say, well, the statistics seem to show us that pretty regularly 1,000 people cross the Mexican-U.S. border into the United States every single day. That probably on many days is a very conservative estimate, but the average that both the Border Patrol and those who are down there that are trying to determine what is happening, that is pretty much what everybody agrees to, that at least 1,000 people a

day are crossing our border, at least 30,000 to 31,000 people a month are crossing this border, or 365,000 people a year are crossing the southern border of the United States into our country. And they are doing it, Mr. Speaker, no matter what you want to call it, they are doing it illegally.

The law says you can't do that, that it is against the law. You can call it whatever you want to call it, but it is breaking the laws of these United States, and these people are coming in at least in those numbers. And in addition to those people, or as a part of those people, who else is coming across our southern borders? Do we know?

Well, we know a little bit. We know that last year we caught 68,000 what we call OTMs. Those are people that are "other than Mexicans." And that is a term that has been adopted to define people from any other country but Mexico that have been caught and apprehended crossing our southern border. The Border Patrol and the immigration authorities have determined to call them OTMs, "other than Mexicans."

We have heard in testimony at hearings, just as recently as last week, that 30,000 Brazilians were shipped home a short time ago; that people from the Middle East, people from China, people from all over the Southern hemisphere have come into this country illegally crossing the Mexican border into the United States. Mr. Speaker, I would submit that that is the crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that when people discuss what they are very concerned about, what they think has the potential to change their lives, to threaten their lives, it is who is coming across our southern border in these huge volumes. That is what the American people see as a crisis.

Now, we are called upon, as we look at what is going on here in Congress, we are called upon to address these issues, and I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that what we are called upon to do is to address the crisis first. I have used this example before, but if a series of wreck victims is brought in from a car wreck out on the highway outside of Washington, DC, today, and brought into the emergency room of the hospital, and we have one man who has a broken arm and we have one man who is skinned up because he slid on the pavement and maybe he has a broken hand and maybe a sore back, and then we have one man who has arterial bleeding from the throat, where is the crisis? The man with the arterial bleeding from the throat is going to bleed out and die in seconds if the emergency room does not immediately go and stop the bleeding where it is occurring because it doesn't take long for the heart to pump the body dry out of a main artery. Of course, our well-trained medical professionals in this country would recognize to go to the crisis and meet the crisis where the bleeding is.

The bleeding, Mr. Speaker, is at the border. That is where the bleeding is.